AMAR CHITRA KATHA

# Shringabhuja

No. 378 Rs. 5/-

*Based on a story from the Kathasaritsagara*

**Amar Chitra Katha**
No. 378 April 1, 1987

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# Shringabhuja

Shringabhuja is a story from the Kathasaritsagara, a Sanskrit classic of the eleventh century, written by Somadeva. Prince Shringabhuja, the hero, in search of his father's golden arrow comes across a demoness Rupashikha. She falls in love with him and decides to help him. The result is a fascinating blend of the world of men and the world of demons, in which fantasy, adventure and romance hold the reader enthralled.

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# Shringabhuja

THE KING HAD A HUNDRED WIVES, OF WHOM GUNAVARA WAS THE CHIEF QUEEN. THE KING WAS CHILDLESS, AND FELT UNHAPPY ABOUT IT.

I WORRY ABOUT MY KINGDOM. WHO WILL INHERIT IT?

IT IS A PITY, YOUR MAJESTY, THAT NOT ONE OF YOUR HUNDRED WIVES HAS BEEN ABLE TO GIVE YOU AN HEIR.

I CARE LITTLE ABOUT THE OTHERS. BUT I WISH YOU...

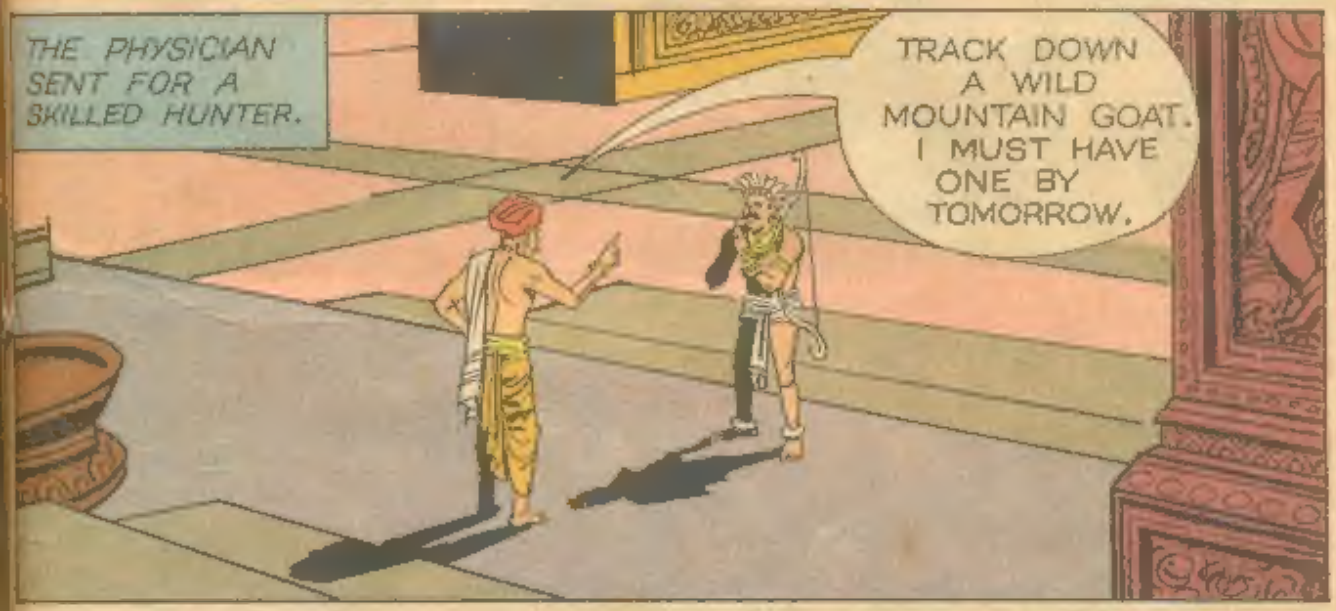
IT IS GOD'S WILL, MY LORD.

THE KING, HOWEVER, DID NOT RESIGN HIMSELF TO FATE. HE SENT FOR THE COURT PHYSICIAN.

YOU KNOW WHAT IS TROUBLING ME. IS THERE NO WAY?

THERE IS, YOUR MAJESTY.

I WILL CONCOCT A SPECIAL BREW WHICH THE QUEENS MUST DRINK.
WASTE NO TIME. SET ABOUT IT IMMEDIATELY.


THE PHYSICIAN SENT FOR A SKILLED HUNTER.
TRACK DOWN A WILD MOUNTAIN GOAT. I MUST HAVE ONE BY TOMORROW.

NEXT, THE ROYAL CHEF WAS SUMMONED.
LET YOUR BEST COOKS STAND BY. TOMORROW WE PREPARE A BREW, DEAR FRIEND.
WE HAVE HEARD, SIR.

THE QUEENS ASSEMBLED IN THE ROYAL DINING HALL. AYASOLEKHA, ONE OF THE QUEENS, NOTICED THAT GUNAVARA WAS NOT THERE.
GOOD. I HOPE SHE ARRIVES LATE. IF SHE HAS A SON, OUR CHILDREN DON'T STAND A CHANCE.

THE PHYSICIAN ANNOUNCED—
MY BREW IS READY!

THE PRIEST PRONOUNCED THE BLESSINGS...
ALL YOU QUEENS OF VIRABHUJA— MAY YOU BEAR HIM SPLENDID SONS!

...AND THE QUEENS DRANK UP THE MAGIC POTION.

JUST AS THE LAST CUP HAD BEEN DRAINED—
QUEEN GUNAVARA! HOW COULD WE HAVE OVERLOOKED HER?
THE KING WILL NEVER FORGIVE US!
KING VIRABHUJA AND QUEEN GUNAVARA ARE HERE!
WHAT SHALL WE DO?
THE KING WAVED GUNAVARA INTO THE ROOM.
MY QUEEN, YOU HAVE FASTED AND PRAYED FOR THREE DAYS. MAY YOUR DEVOTIONS MEET WITH SPECIAL SUCCESS.
HOW HE DOTES ON HER!

BUT SIR...
...THERE IS NO BREW LEFT.

NO BREW LEFT! BUT IT WAS FOR HER THAT ALL THIS WAS DONE. SEND FOR THE COOK. HE MIGHT HAVE SOME LEFT.

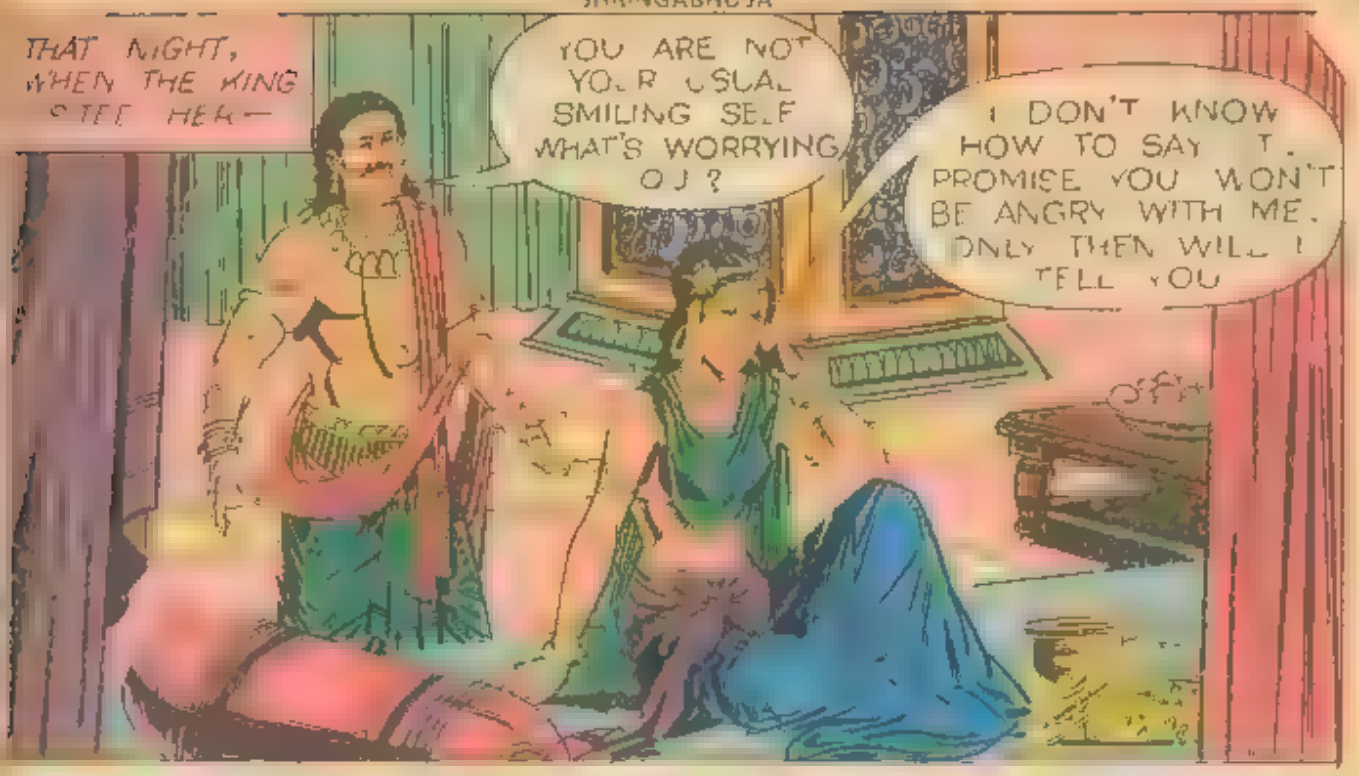
AS THE QUEENS, DREADING THE KING'S ANGER, HURRIED AWAY—
GUNAVARA, MY PROUD ONE, IT IS TOO LATE.

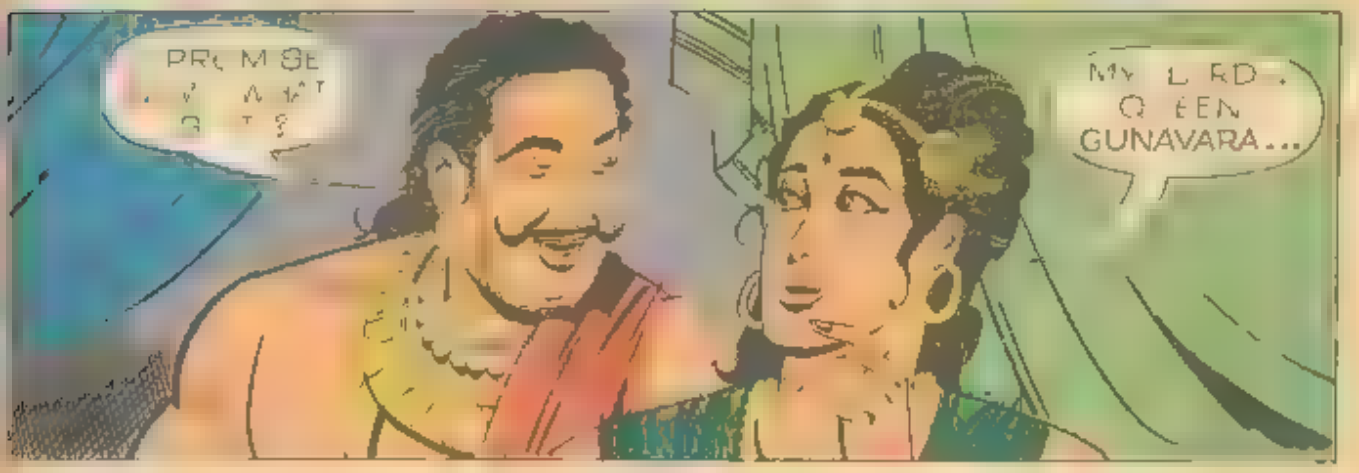
WHILE THE PHYSICIAN WAITED FOR THE COOK TO ARRIVE—
MY LORD. IF HE HAS SAVED THE CREATURE'S HORNS THERE IS HOPE YET.
FOR YOUR SAKE, I HOPE HE HAS!

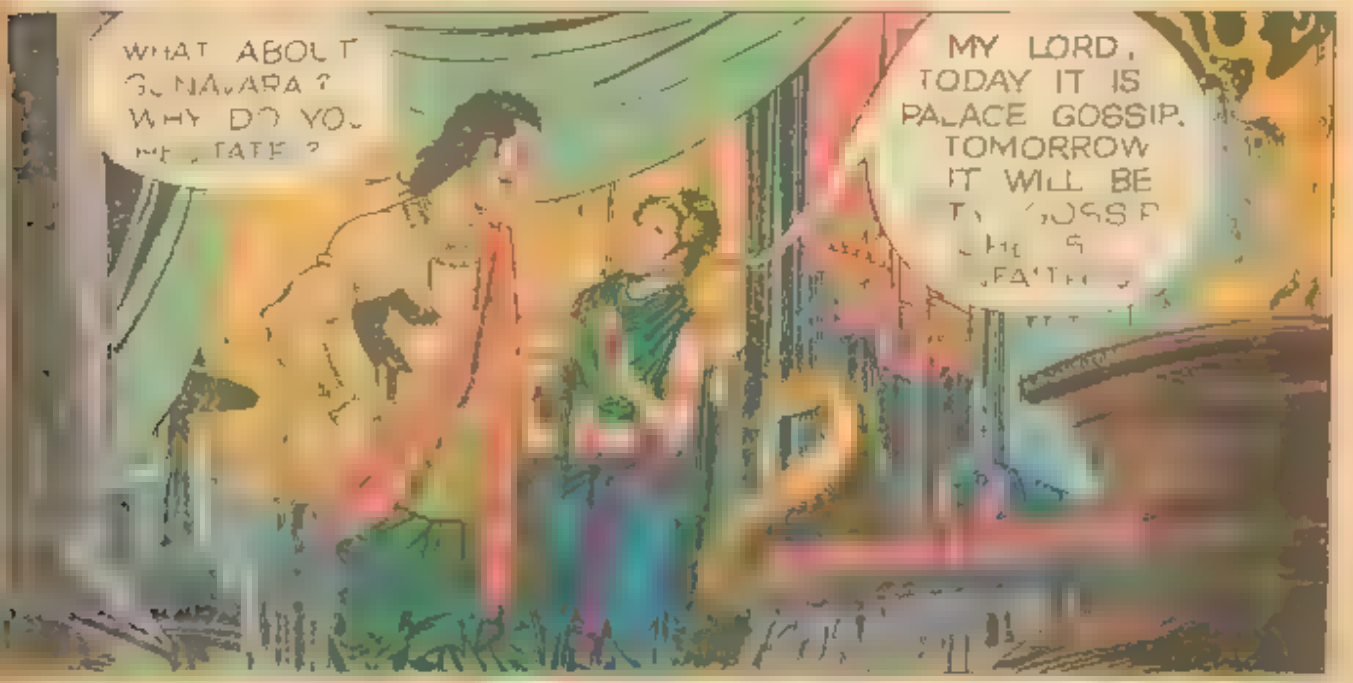
THE COOK ARRIVED AND—
THERE IS NO...
...BREW LEFT. NEVER MIND. HAVE YOU THROWN AWAY THE HORNS?

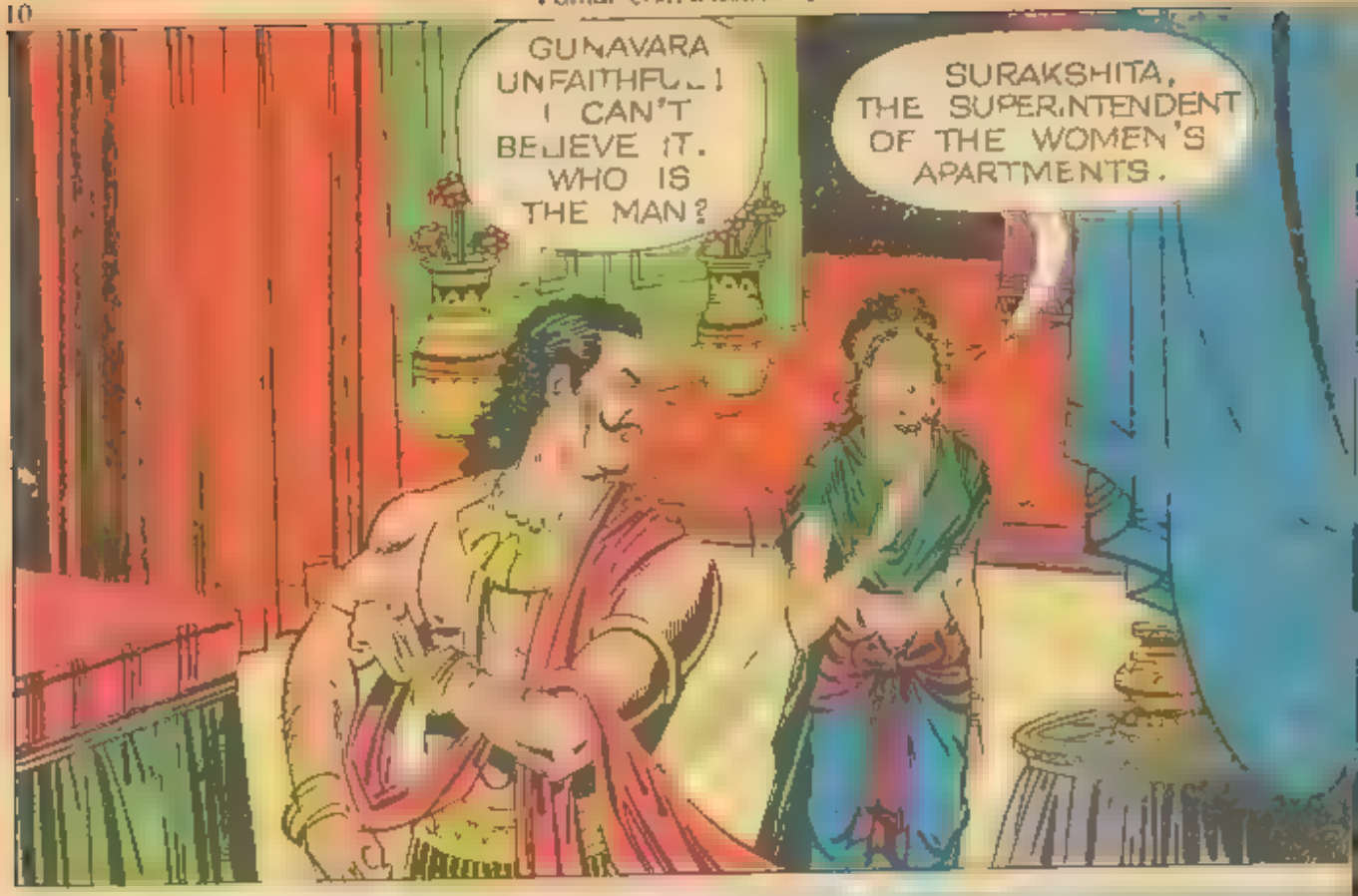
I SAVED THEM. THEY WERE SO MAJESTIC LIKE SLENDER SCYTHES!
GOOD. CRACK THEM OPEN, REMOVE THE MARROW AND PREPARE A SOUP FOR QUEEN GUNAVARA. THE SON SHE BEARS, I PREDICT, WILL OUTSHINE THE REST.

*'SHRINGA' MEANS 'HORN'


THAT NIGHT, WHEN THE KING SEES HER—
YOU ARE NOT YOUR USUAL SMILING SELF WHAT'S WORRYING YOU?
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY IT. PROMISE YOU WON'T BE ANGRY WITH ME. ONLY THEN WILL I TELL YOU

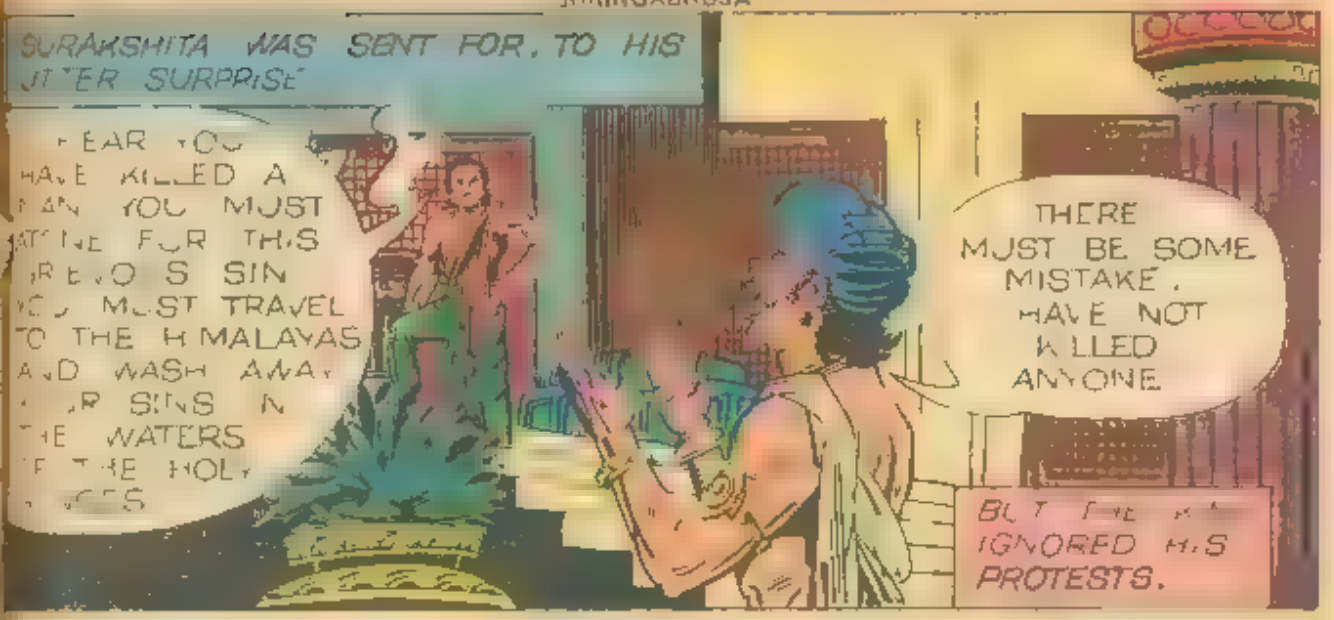

PROMISE
MY LORD, QUEEN GUNAVARA...


WHAT ABOUT GUNAVARA? WHY DO YOU HESITATE?
MY LORD, TODAY IT IS PALACE GOSSIP. TOMORROW IT WILL BE

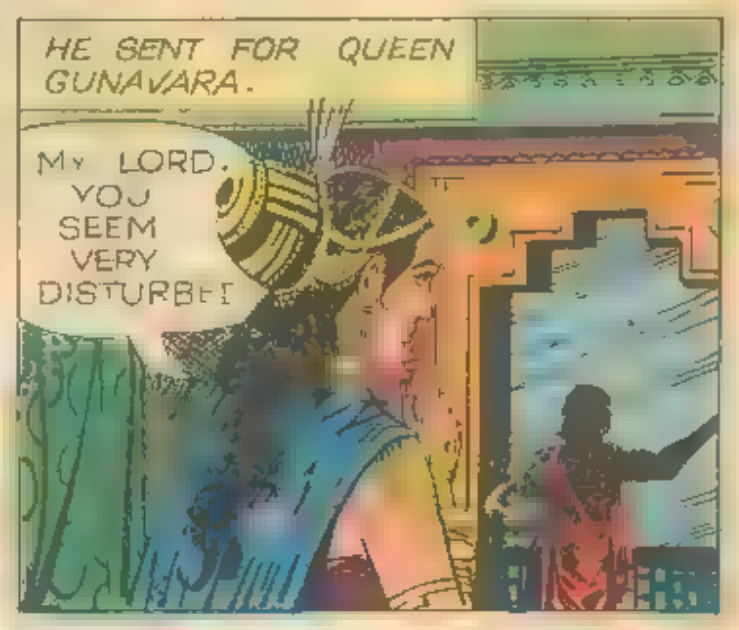

GUNAVARA UNFAITHFUL! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. WHO IS THE MAN?
SURAKSHITA, THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE WOMEN'S APARTMENTS.

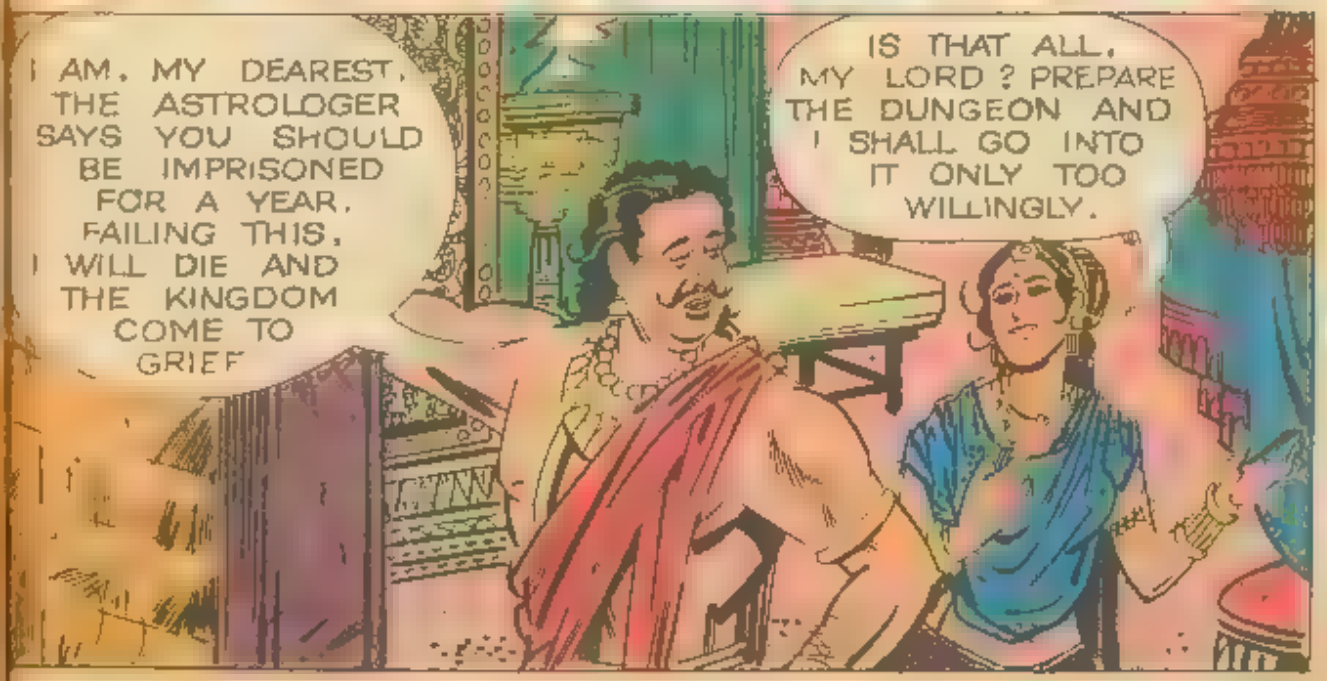
THE KING HAD LEFT - ALMOST BEFORE SHE FINISHED HER SENTENCE
HE WILL NEVER ASK HER STRAIGHT OUT. HE LOVES HER TOO MUCH BUT 'VE SOWN DOUBTS IN HIS MIND

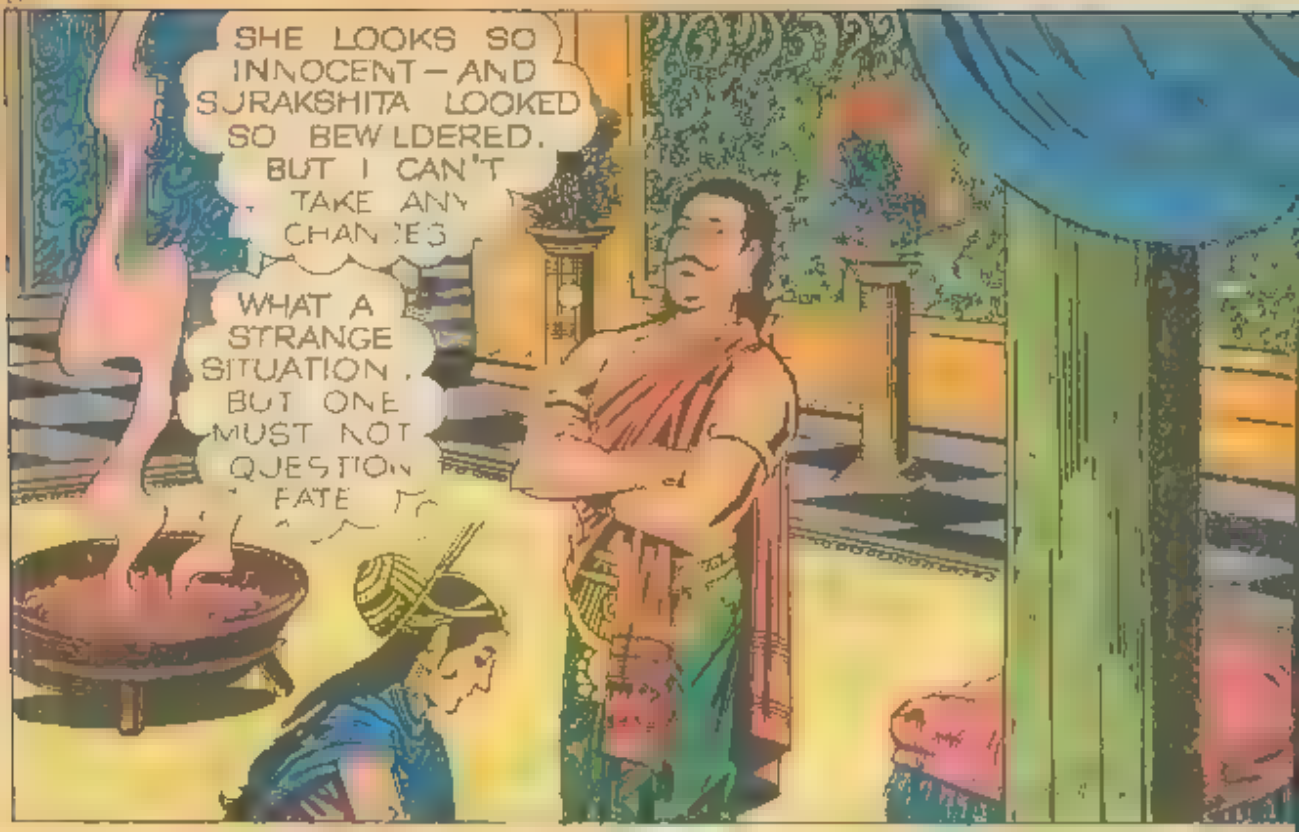
THE KING PACED UP AND DOWN IN HIS APARTMENT. HIS THOUGHTS IN A TURMOIL.
I MUST SEPARATE THEM. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY.

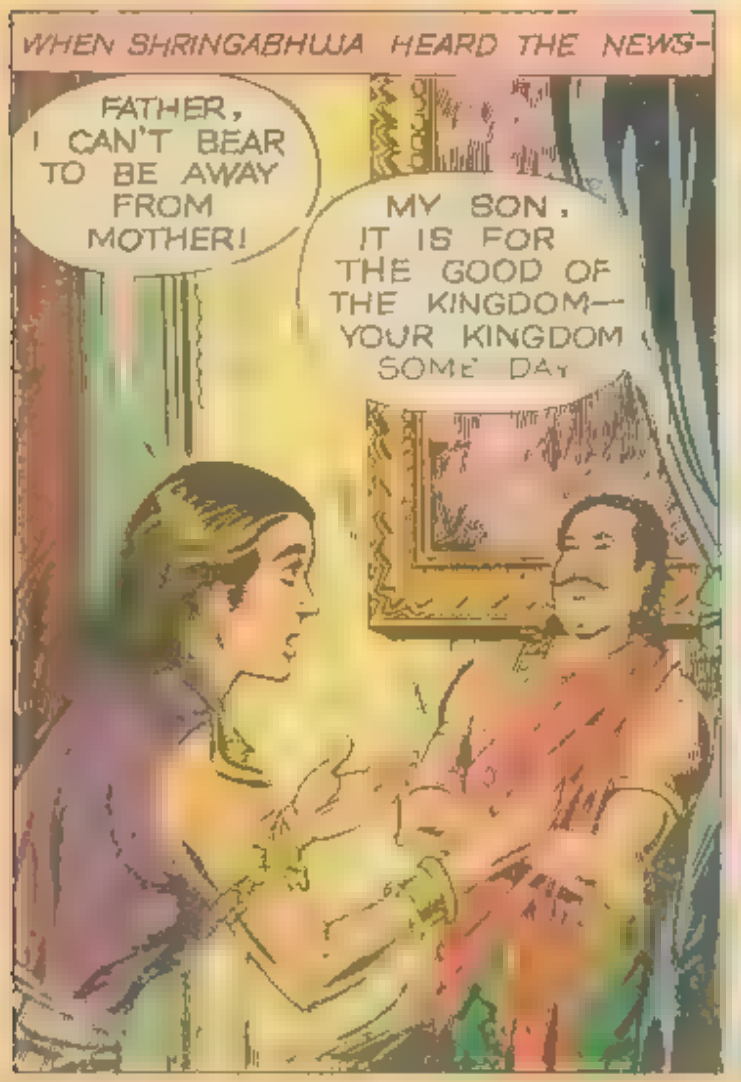

SURAKSHITA WAS SENT FOR. TO HIS UTTER SURPRISE
HAVE KILLED A MAN YOU MUST ATONE FOR THIS GREVOUS SIN YOU MUST TRAVEL TO THE HIMALAYAS AND WASH AWAY YOUR SINS IN THE WATERS OF THE HOLY RIVERS
THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE. HAVE NOT KILLED ANYONE
BUT THE KING IGNORED HIS PROTESTS.

THAT GETS RID OF HIM. NOW, FOR QUEEN GUNAVARA. THIS IS NOT GOING TO BE EASY

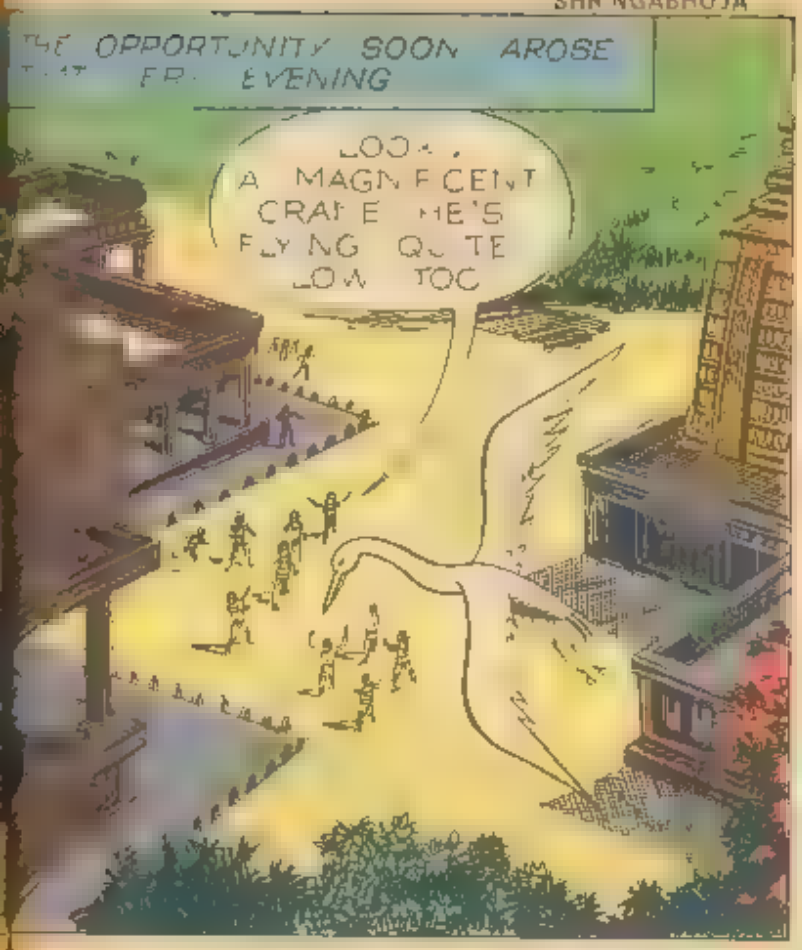

HE SENT FOR QUEEN GUNAVARA.
MY LORD. YOU SEEM VERY DISTURBED


I AM, MY DEAREST. THE ASTROLOGER SAYS YOU SHOULD BE IMPRISONED FOR A YEAR. FAILING THIS, I WILL DIE AND THE KINGDOM COME TO GRIEF
IS THAT ALL, MY LORD? PREPARE THE DUNGEON AND I SHALL GO INTO IT ONLY TOO WILLINGLY.


SHE LOOKS SO INNOCENT—AND SURAKSHITA LOOKED SO BEWILDERED. BUT I CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES.
WHAT A STRANGE SITUATION. BUT ONE MUST NOT QUESTION FATE.

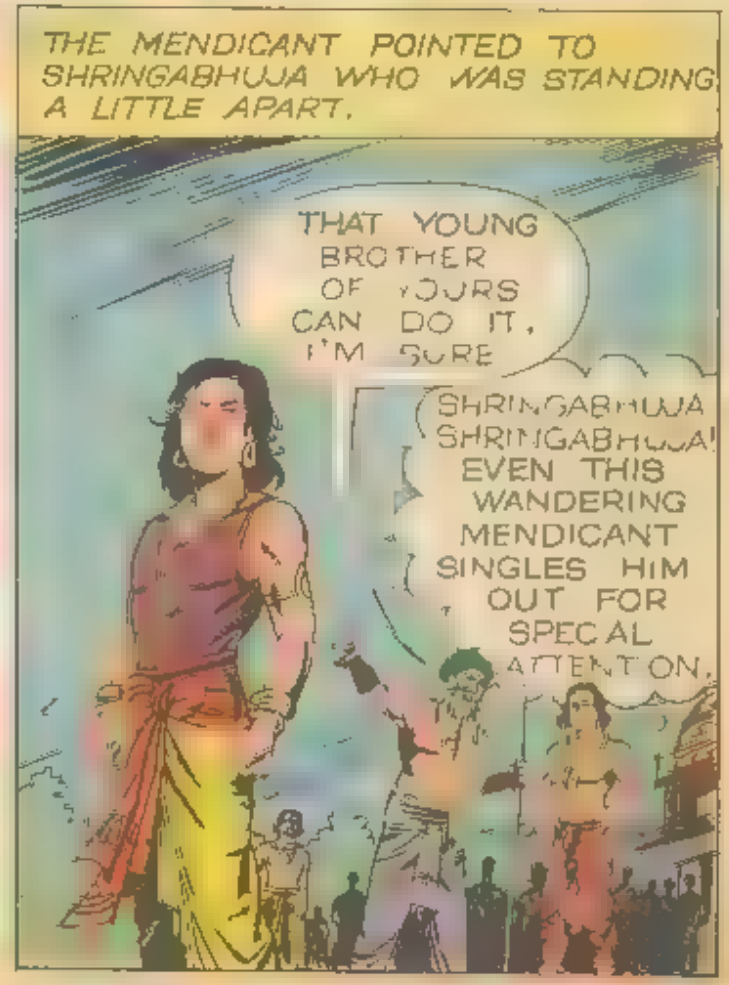

WHEN SHRINGABHUJA HEARD THE NEWS—
FATHER, I CAN'T BEAR TO BE AWAY FROM MOTHER!
MY SON, IT IS FOR THE GOOD OF THE KINGDOM—YOUR KINGDOM SOME DAY

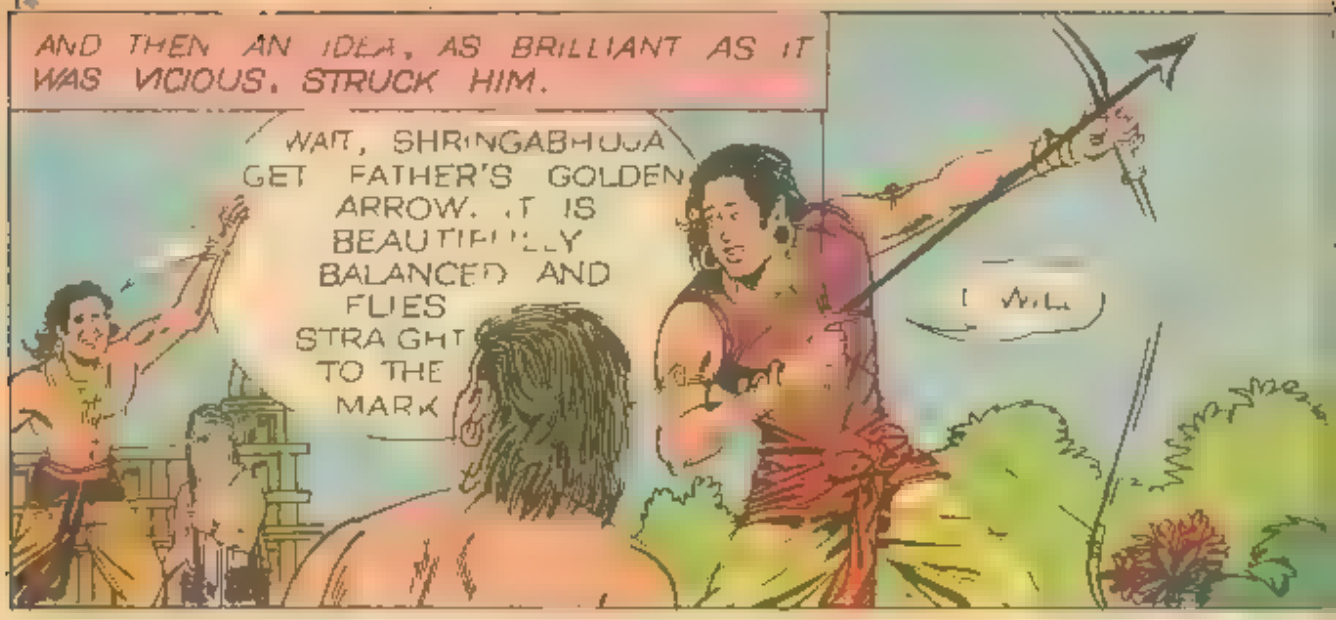
ANASOOYEKHA PUT THE REST OF HER WICKED PLAN INTO ACTION. SHE CALLED HER SON, NARASABHUJA
WATCH OUT FOR AN OPPORTUNITY. SEE THAT THE KING IS REALLY DISPLEASED WITH HIM.

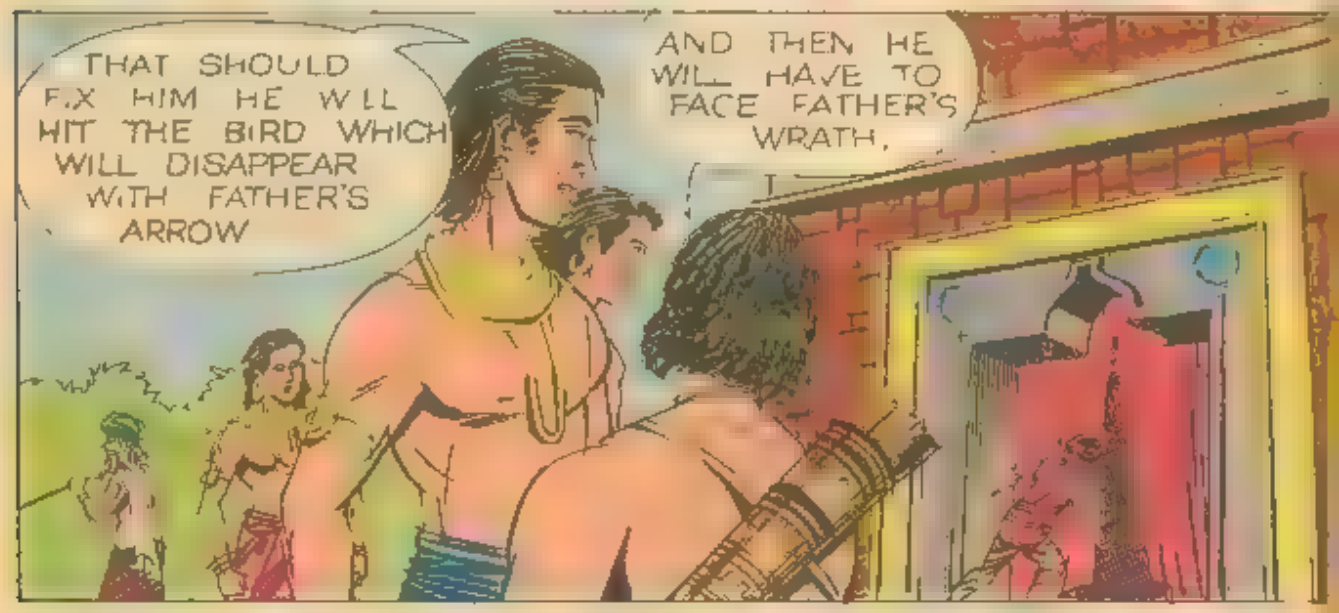

THE OPPORTUNITY SOON AROSE THAT EVENING
LOOK, A MAGNIFICENT CRANE HE'S FLYING QUITE LOW TOO

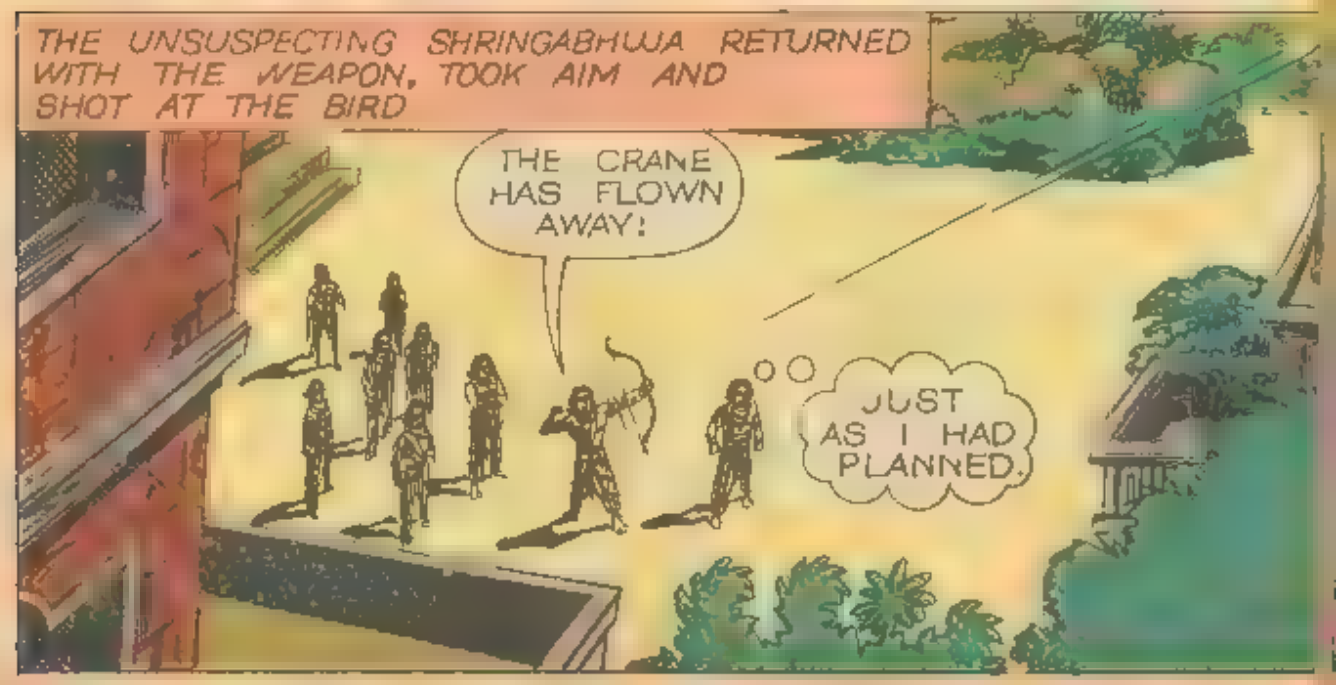
A PASSING MENDICANT APPROACHED THEM
THAT IS NO ORDINARY CRANE IT IS AGNISHIKHA, THE RAKSHASA KING IF YOU SHOOT HIM, YOU WILL BE DOING THE WORLD A GOOD TURN.

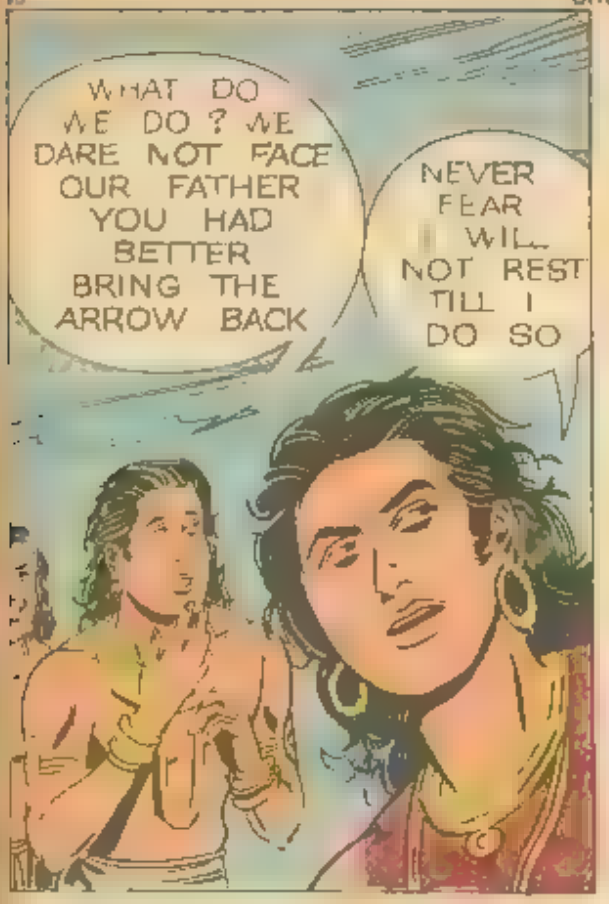
THE PRINCES SHOT AT THE BIRD, ONE BY ONE
WE'VE ALL MISSED
THE CRANE IS STILL CIRCLING.

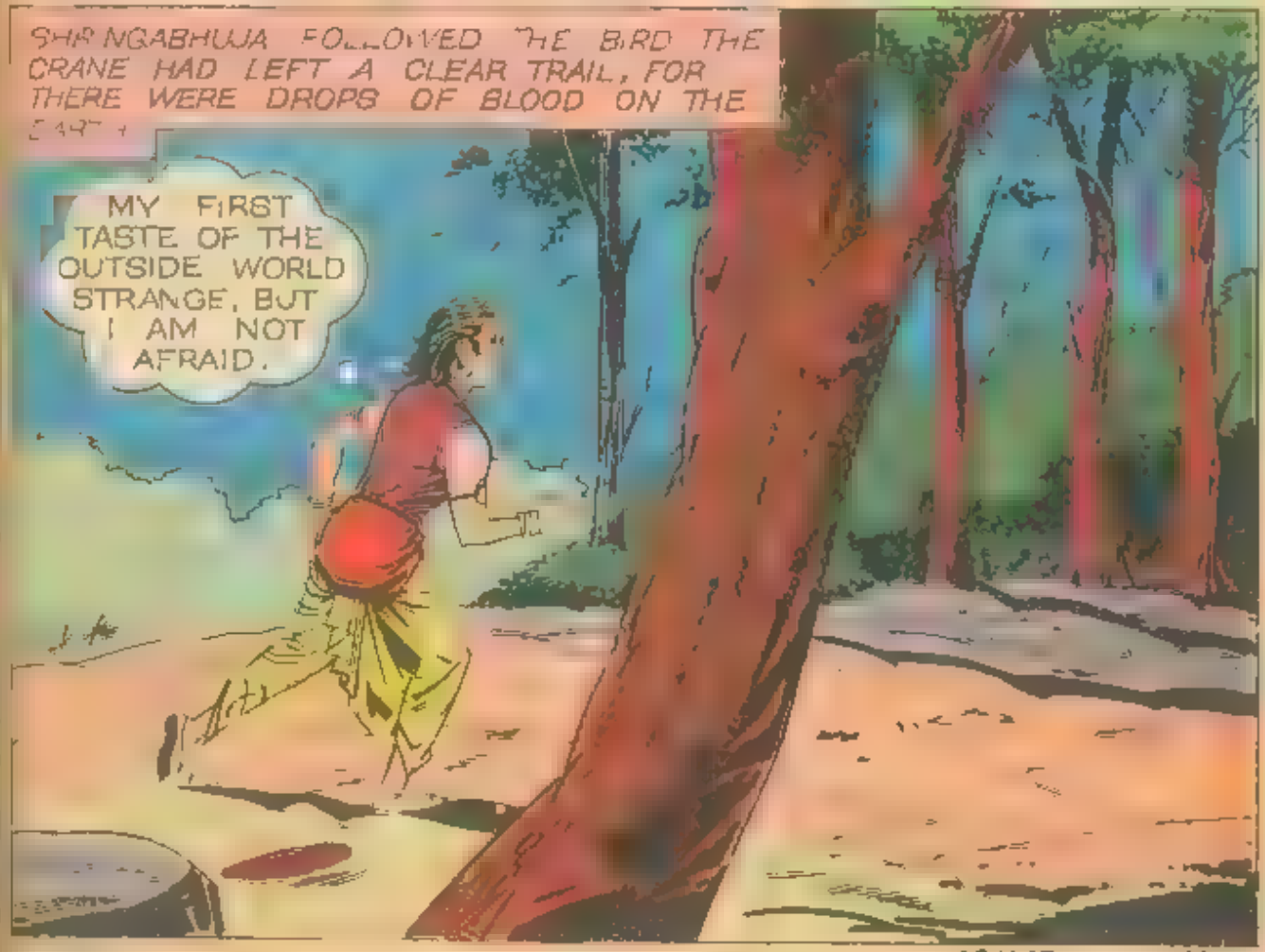

THE MENDICANT POINTED TO SHRINGABHUJA WHO WAS STANDING A LITTLE APART.
THAT YOUNG BROTHER OF YOURS CAN DO IT, I'M SURE
SHRINGABHUJA SHRINGABHUJA! EVEN THIS WANDERING MENDICANT SINGLES HIM OUT FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION.


AND THEN AN IDEA, AS BRILLIANT AS IT WAS VICIOUS, STRUCK HIM.
WAIT, SHRINGABHUJA GET FATHER'S GOLDEN ARROW. IT IS BEAUTIFULLY BALANCED AND FLIES STRAIGHT TO THE MARK
I WILL


THAT SHOULD FIX HIM HE WILL HIT THE BIRD WHICH WILL DISAPPEAR WITH FATHER'S ARROW
AND THEN HE WILL HAVE TO FACE FATHER'S WRATH.


THE UNSUSPECTING SHRINGABHUJA RETURNED WITH THE WEAPON, TOOK AIM AND SHOT AT THE BIRD
THE CRANE HAS FLOWN AWAY!
JUST AS I HAD PLANNED.



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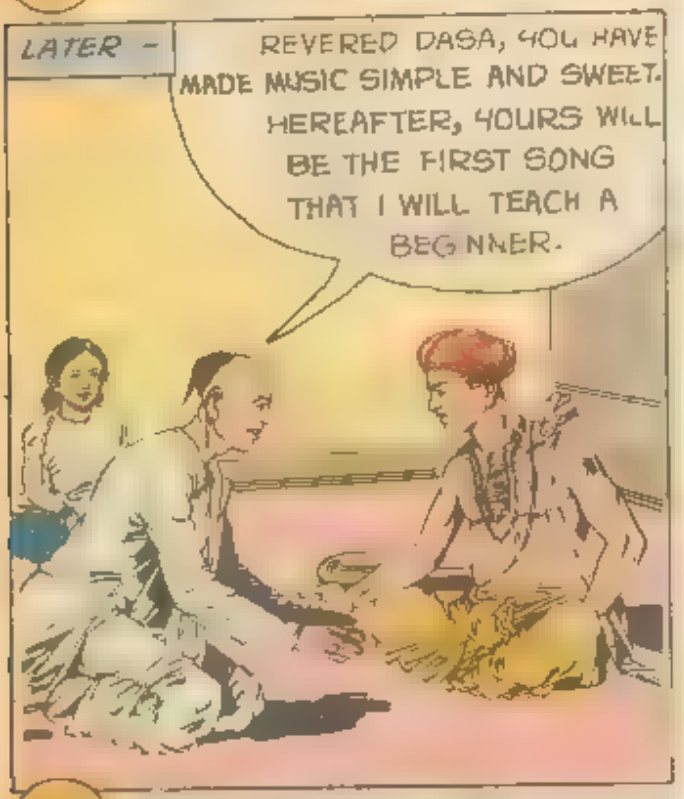
# Quiz

## INDIA–6

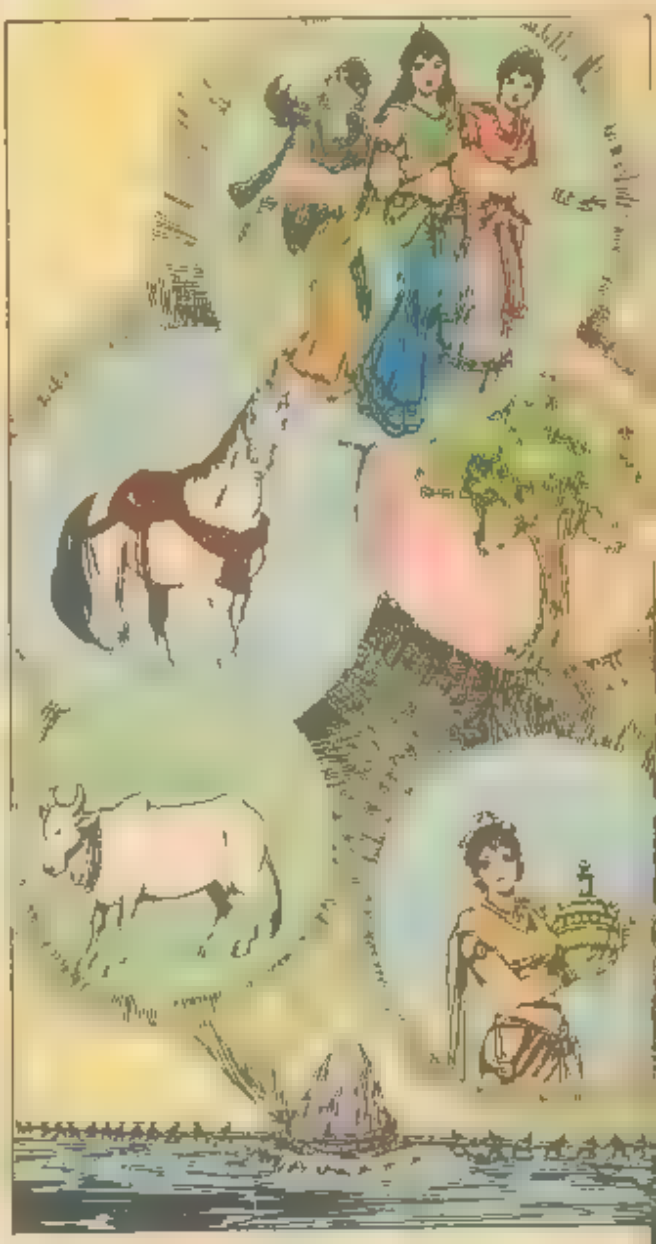
Compiled by Shobha Rao

## I IDENTIFY THE MEN.

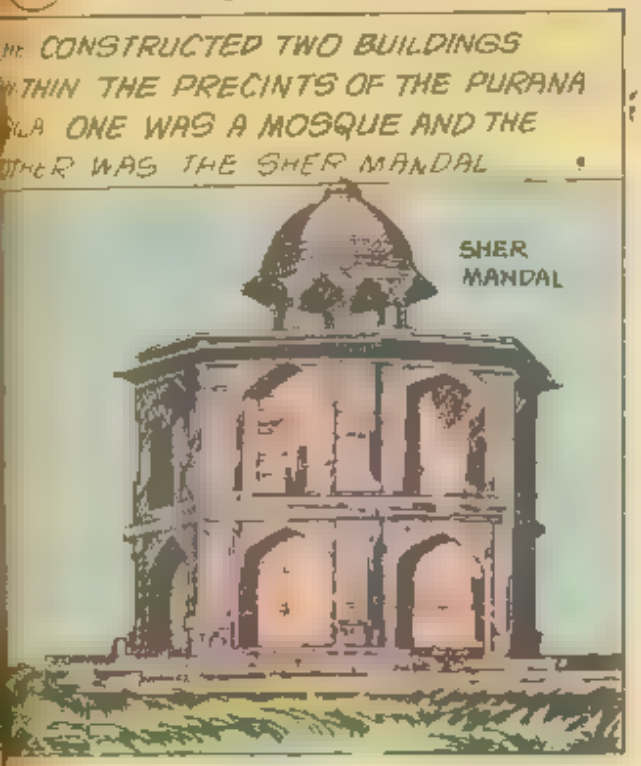



## II IDENTIFY THE SPEAKERS.

## III NAME THE THINGS SHOWN IN THE ILLUSTRATION.



## IV WHO IS THIS GREAT KING?




## V FILL IN THE BLANK.

### RULES

1. Every entry must be accompanied with the coupon given on this page.
2. The first 50 all-correct entries received in our office will each receive 2 titles of Amar Chitra Katha.
3. Every correct entry will receive a green certificate
4. Every one-error entry will receive a blue certificate
5. Any participant who collects three green or six blue certificates till June 1987 will receive a free subscription of Amar Chitra Katha for six months.
6. Any participant who collects four green or eight or more blue certificates till June 1987 will receive a free subscription of Amar Chitra Katha for one year
7. Any participant sending in five or more all correct entries till June 1987 will be awarded a cash prize of Rs. 5,000/-. If there is more than one claimant the prize will be equally distributed among those who have sent five or more all-correct entries
8. If we do not receive five all-correct entries from anyone till June 1987, the prize will be distributed among those who have sent in four all-correct entries.
9. The decision of the judges will be final and binding
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Giving: Name, Age, Address, Answers

Last date for receiving entries 30 4 1987

### Answers to Quiz India—5

Alexander should not have been shown wearing his helmet.

These words were addressed to Parvati by Shiva for not paying attention to what he was saying

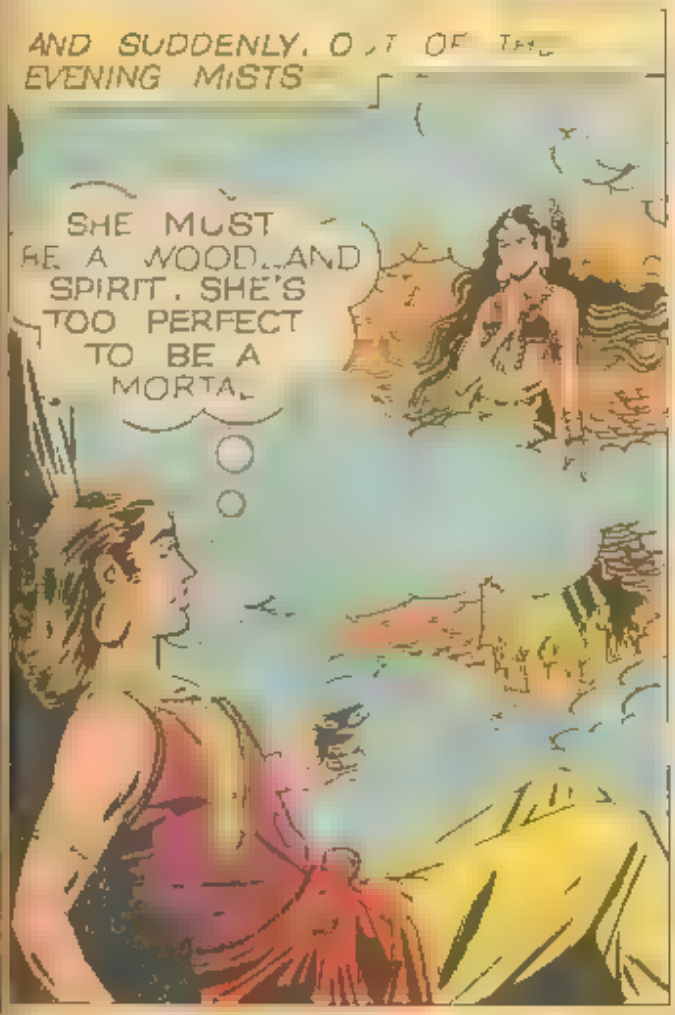
III. Kannappa removes his own eye to replace Shiva's.

IV. a Pundalik b Humayun

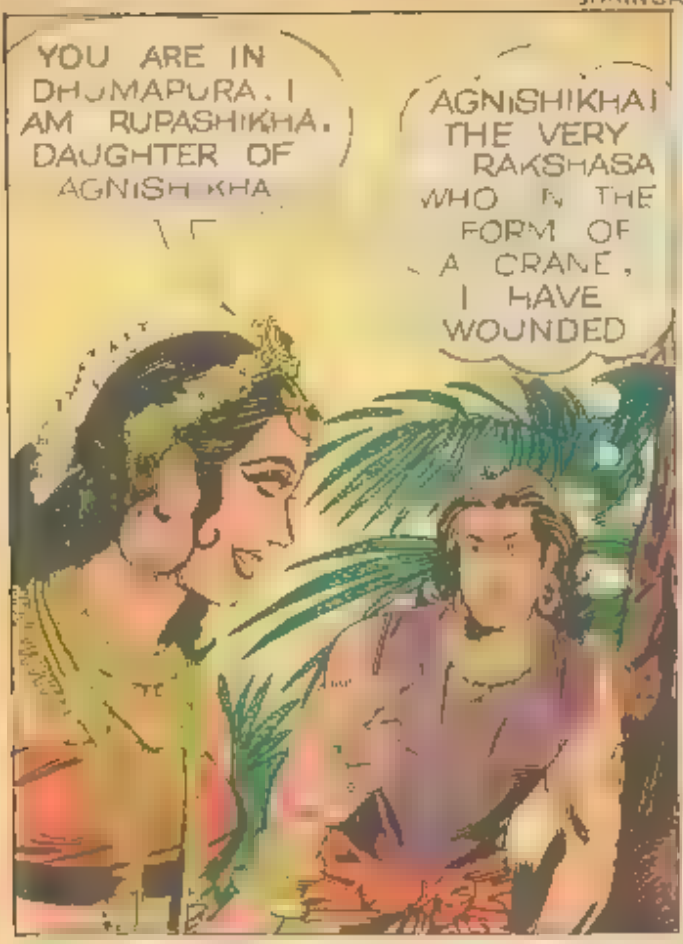
V. Satyabhama

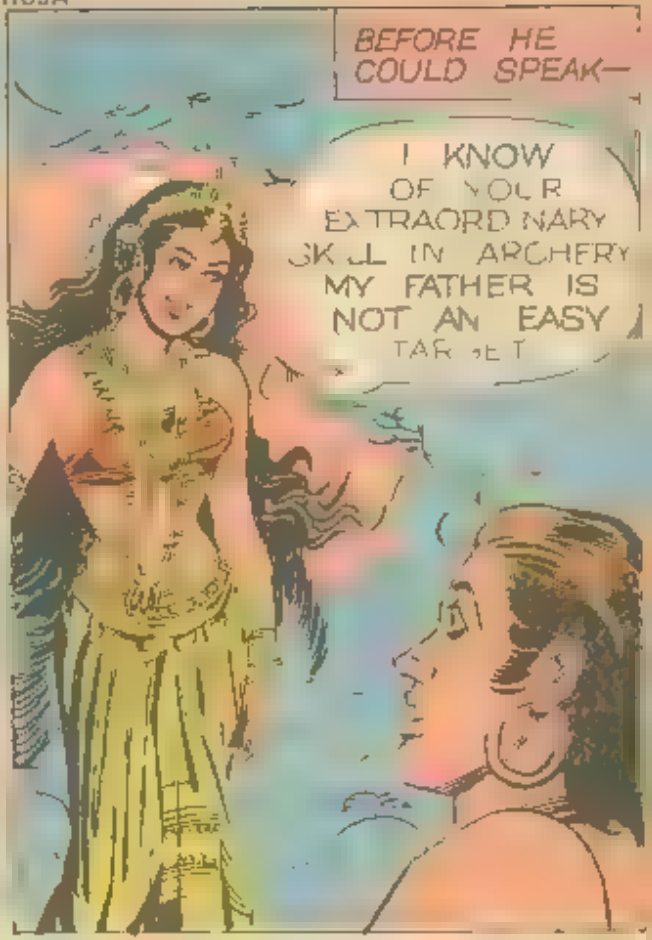
THE TRAIL STOPPED SUDDENLY AND HE FOUND HIMSELF IN A GARDEN CITY, AMIDST DENSE JUNGLE
THIS IS FAIRYLAND

INDEED, IT WAS. THE TREES WERE ALIVE WITH SINGING BIRDS AND LADEN WITH SWEET-SMELLING FLOWERS
I MUST SIT DOWN.


AND SUDDENLY, OUT OF THE EVENING MISTS
SHE MUST BE A WOODLAND SPIRIT. SHE'S TOO PERFECT TO BE A MORTAL

AS SHE MOVED CLOSER
WHERE AM I? WHO ARE YOU? WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?




THE EVENING WORE ON AS SHRINGABHUJA TOLD HER ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED.

MY FATHER HAS BEEN NURSED BY MAGIC HANDS AND IS VERY WELL. THE ARROW IS WITH ME — I TOOK A FANCY TO IT

BUT MUST HAVE IT BACK

YOU WILL, IN GOOD TIME. BUT WE MUST FIRST GET MARRIED. I WANT YOU TO BE MY HUSBAND

MY LIFE, MY FORTUNES ARE YOURS.

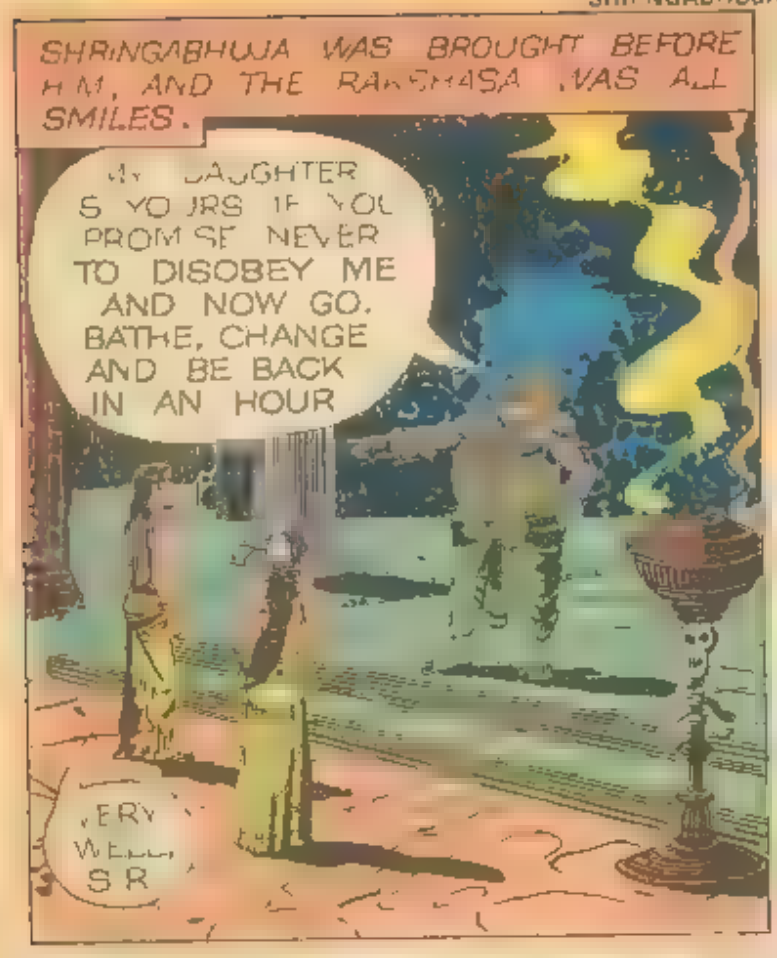
MY DEAR SHRINGABHUJA, MY FATHER IS AN OLD RAKSHASA AND NEEDS TO BE TACKLED. YOU WILL SOON SEE HIS COLD

RUPASHIKHA LEFT HIM, TO GO TO AGNISHIKHA. SHE WENT STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

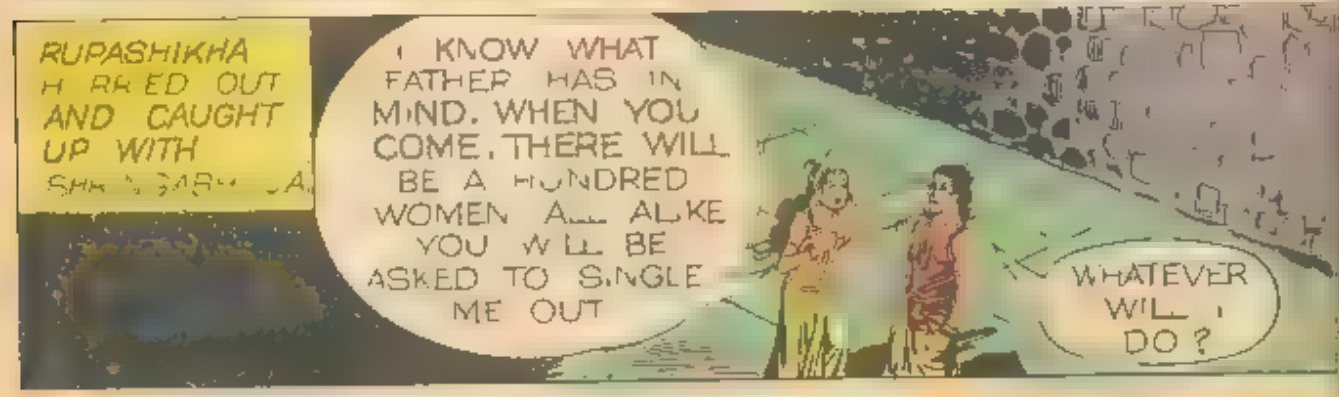
FATHER, I HAVE MET A WONDERFUL MAN. I MUST MARRY HIM.

THAT IS STRANGE, COMING FROM A RAKSHASI. YOU SHOULD BE WANTING TO EAT HIM

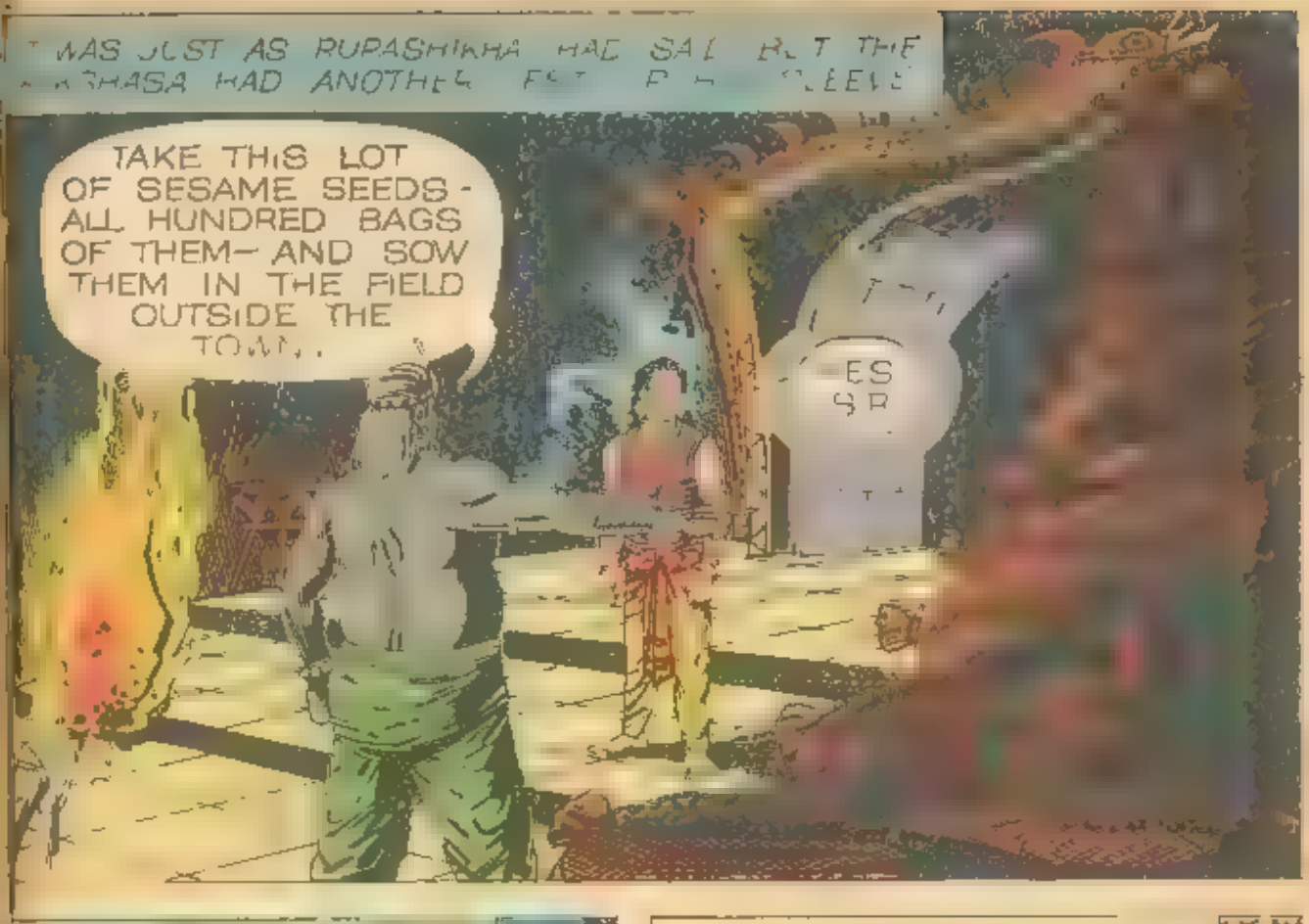
FATHER HE'S SPECIAL, VERY SPECIAL


SHRINGABHUJA WAS BROUGHT BEFORE HIM, AND THE RAKSHASA WAS ALL SMILES.
MY DAUGHTER IS YOURS IF YOU PROMISE NEVER TO DISOBEY ME AND NOW GO. BATHE, CHANGE AND BE BACK IN AN HOUR
VERY WELL, SIR

AND RUPASHIKHA, BRING YOUR SISTERS HERE


RUPASHIKHA HURRIED OUT AND CAUGHT UP WITH SHRINGABHUJA.
I KNOW WHAT FATHER HAS IN MIND. WHEN YOU COME, THERE WILL BE A HUNDRED WOMEN ALL ALIKE. YOU WILL BE ASKED TO SINGLE ME OUT
WHATEVER WILL I DO?

JUST LOOK OUT FOR THE ONE WITH A GARLAND OVER HER EARS. THAT WILL BE ME

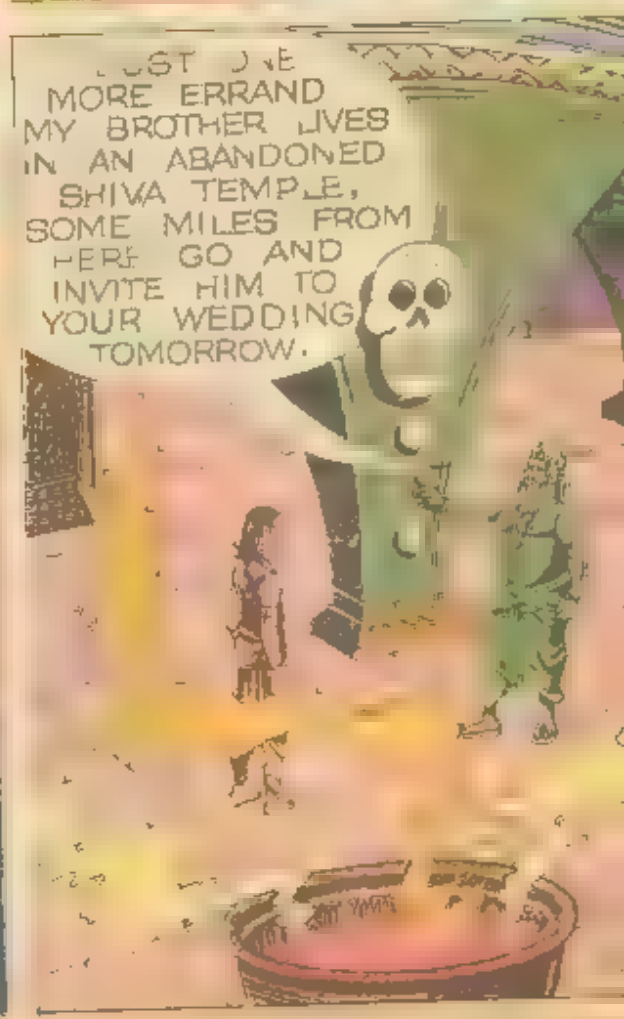

TAKE THIS LOT OF SESAME SEEDS - ALL HUNDRED BAGS OF THEM— AND SOW THEM IN THE FIELD OUTSIDE THE TOWN.

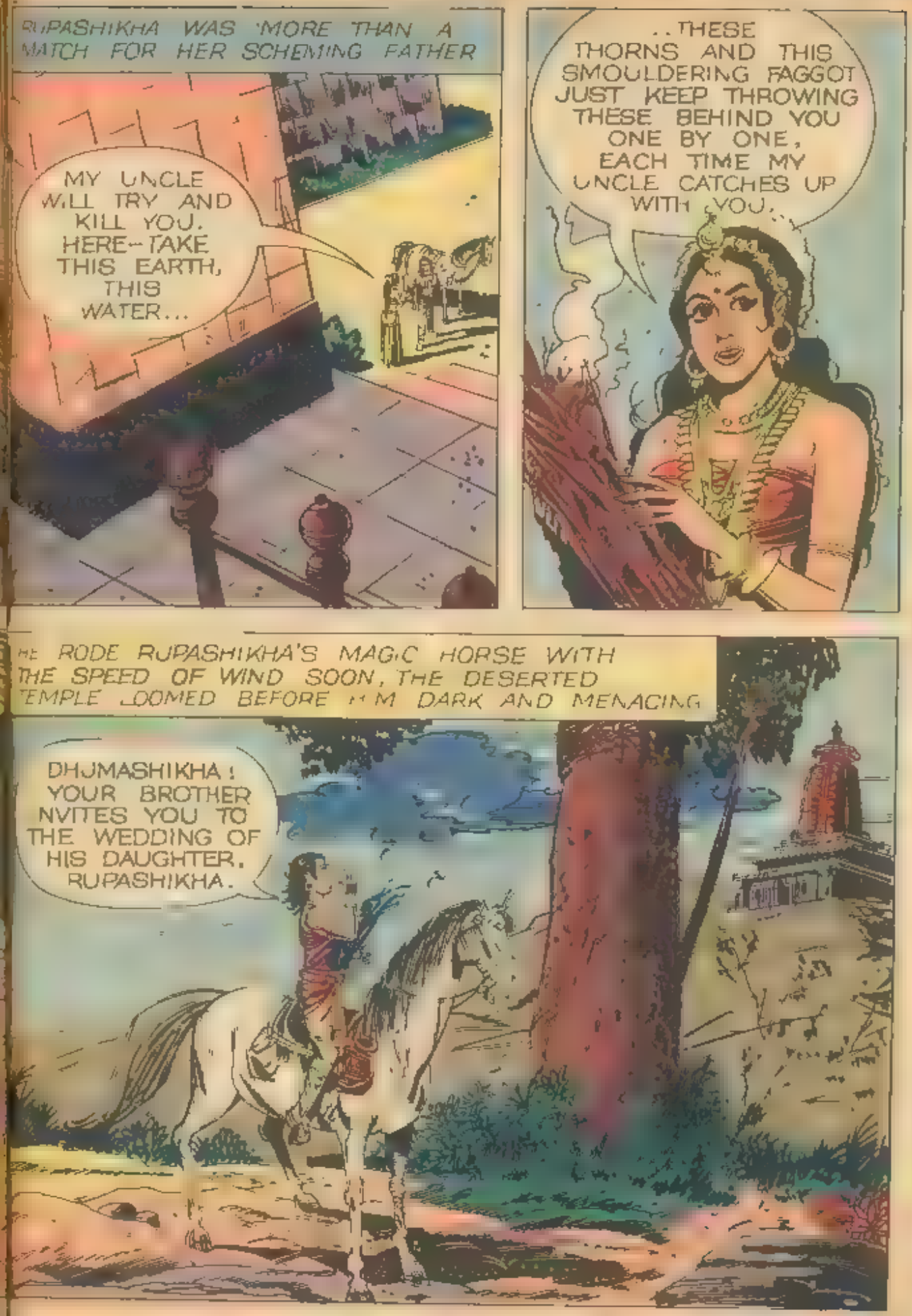
I MAY HAVE TO USE MAGIC TO COMPLETE THE TASK BUT IT WILL BE DONE.

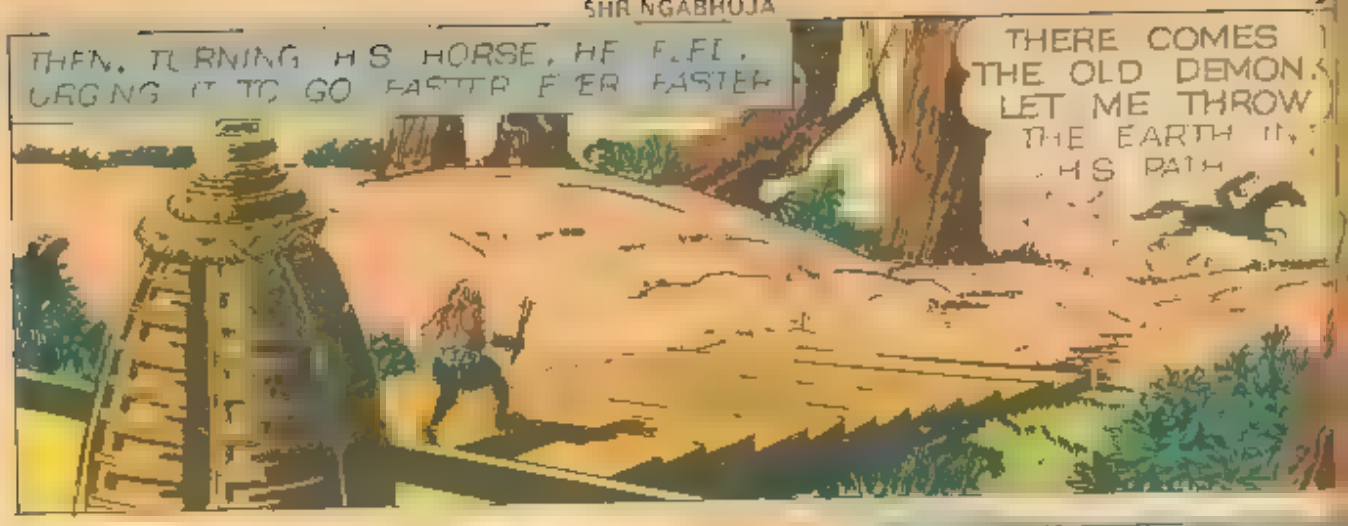
BUT THE BATTLE OF WITS WAS NOT OVER WHEN
I'VE CHANGED MY MIND GO, COLLECT ALL THE SOWN SEEDS AND PILE THEM UP AGAIN IN MY GRANARY

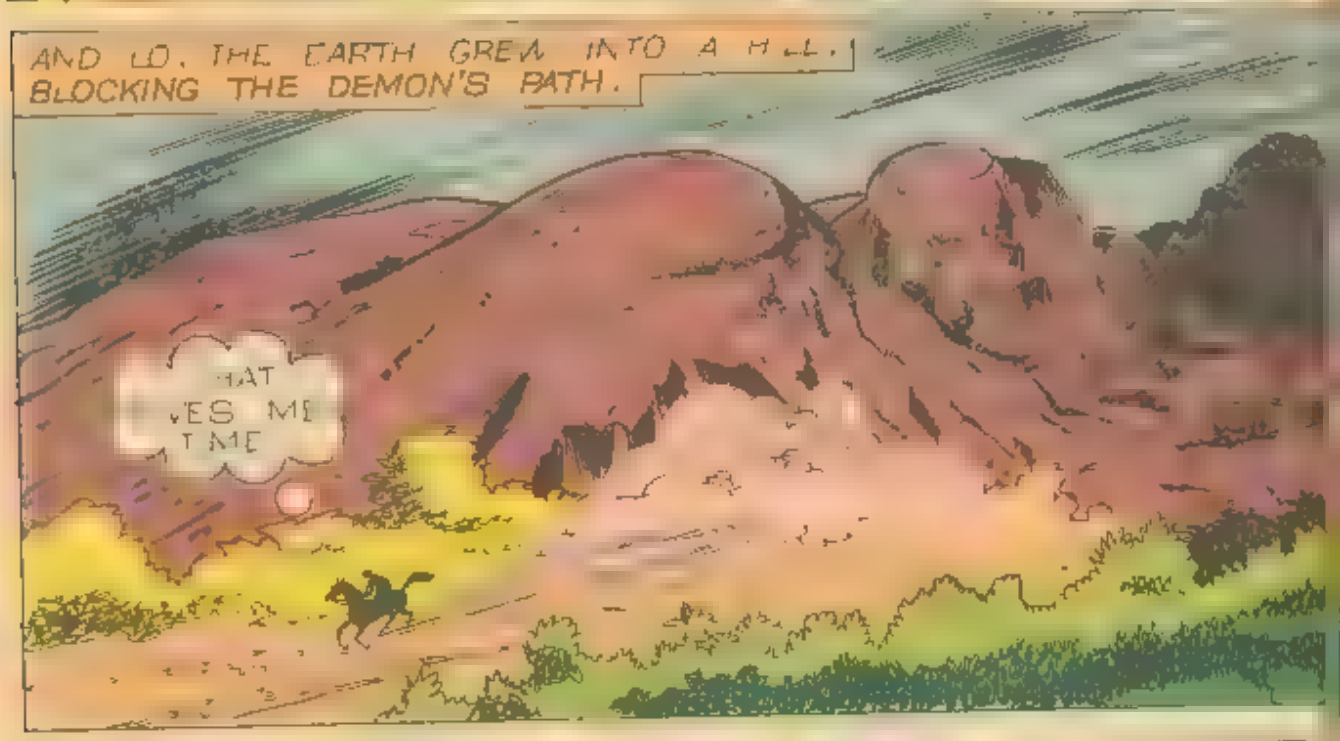
RUPASHIKHA CAME TO HIS RESCUE ONCE AGAIN
EMERGE, YOU ARMIES OF ANTS AND SET TO WORK !
AND THE ANTS SCURRIED AB TING THE SEEDS WHICH

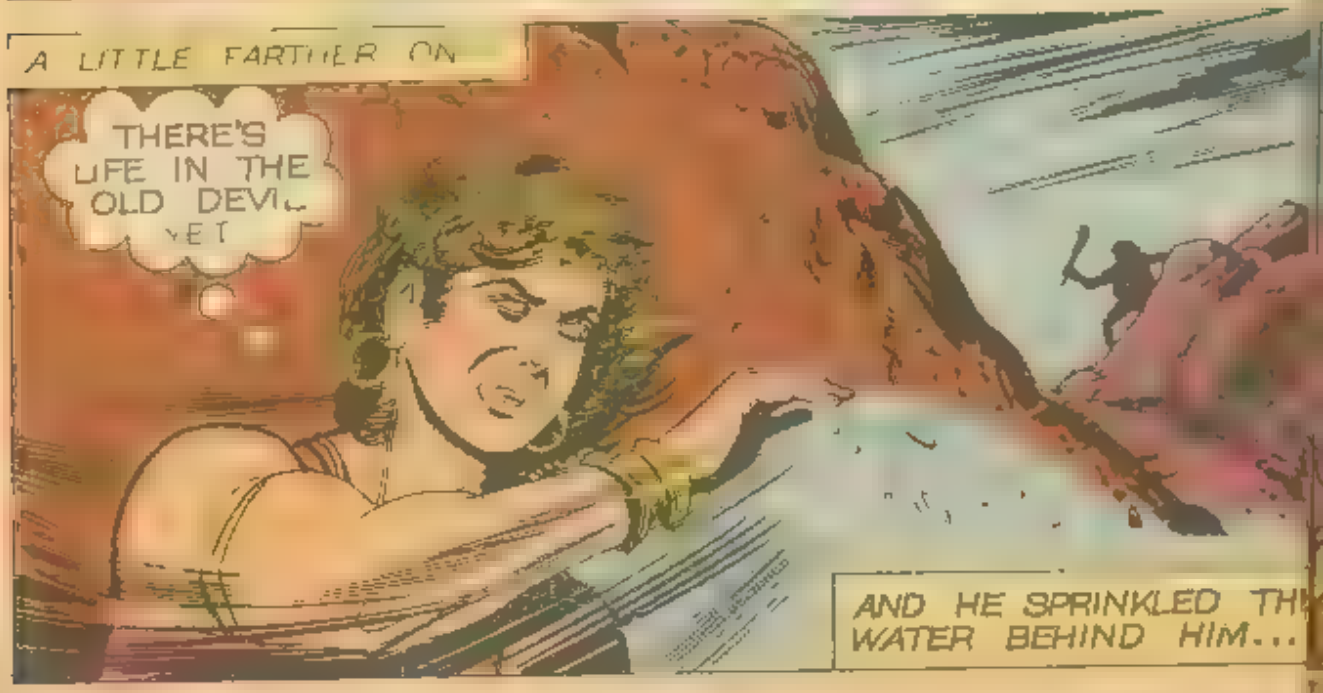
SHRINGABHUJA PRODUCED BEFORE THE RAKSHASA
SIR, I HAVE DONE THE IMPOSSIBLE I HAVE UNSOWN A FIELD
HE IS EXTRAORDINARY. BUT A FEW MORE TASKS WILL REALLY TEST HIM


JUST ONE MORE ERRAND MY BROTHER LIVES IN AN ABANDONED SHIVA TEMPLE, SOME MILES FROM HERE GO AND INVITE HIM TO YOUR WEDDING TOMORROW.


RUPASHIKHA WAS MORE THAN A MATCH FOR HER SCHEMING FATHER
MY UNCLE WILL TRY AND KILL YOU. HERE—TAKE THIS EARTH, THIS WATER...
..THESE THORNS AND THIS SMOULDERING FAGGOT JUST KEEP THROWING THESE BEHIND YOU ONE BY ONE, EACH TIME MY UNCLE CATCHES UP WITH YOU...
HE RODE RUPASHIKHA'S MAGIC HORSE WITH THE SPEED OF WIND SOON, THE DESERTED TEMPLE LOOMED BEFORE HIM DARK AND MENACING
DHUMASHIKHA! YOUR BROTHER INVITES YOU TO THE WEDDING OF HIS DAUGHTER, RUPASHIKHA.

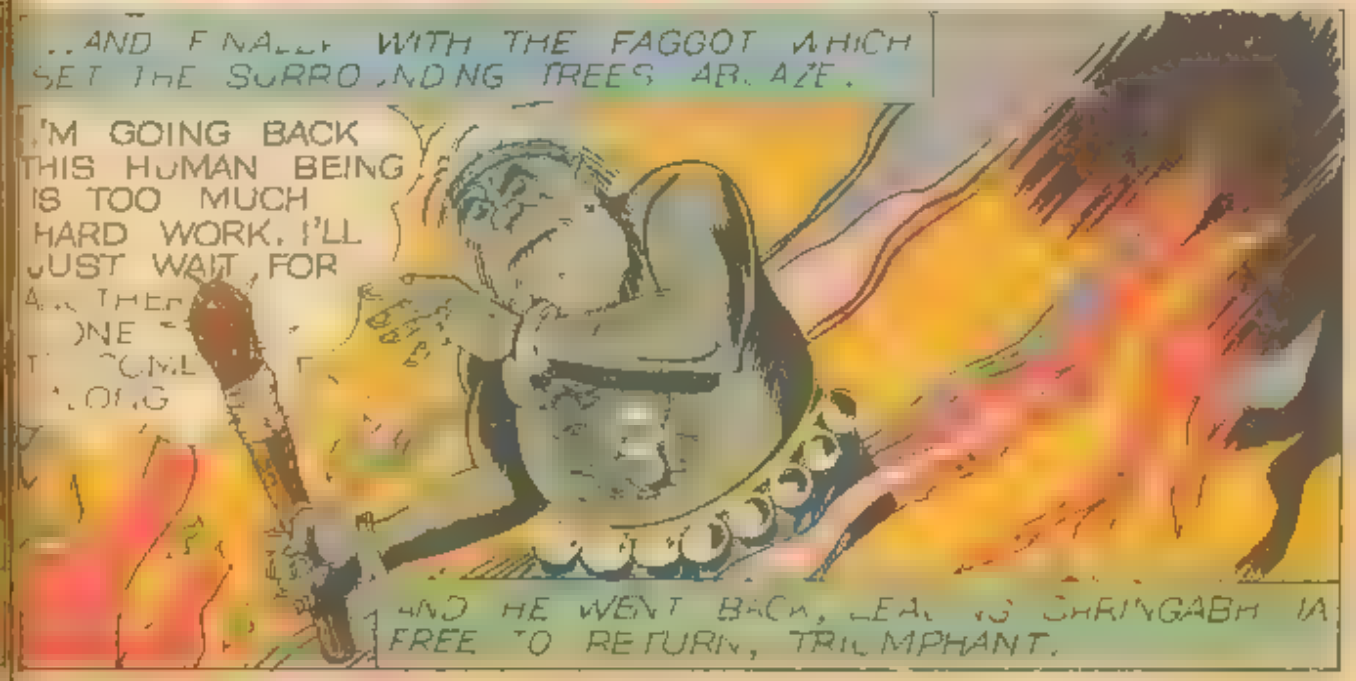

THEN, TURNING HIS HORSE, HE FLED, URGING IT TO GO FASTER EVER FASTER
THERE COMES THE OLD DEMON. LET ME THROW THE EARTH IN HIS PATH

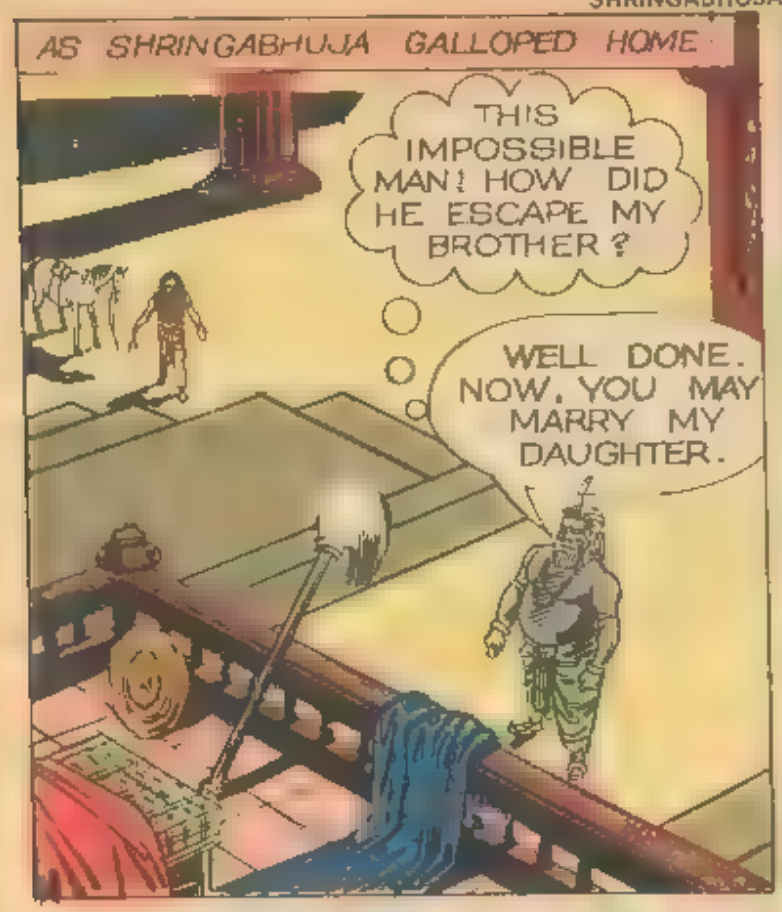

AND LO, THE EARTH GREW INTO A HILL, BLOCKING THE DEMON'S PATH.
THAT GIVES ME TIME

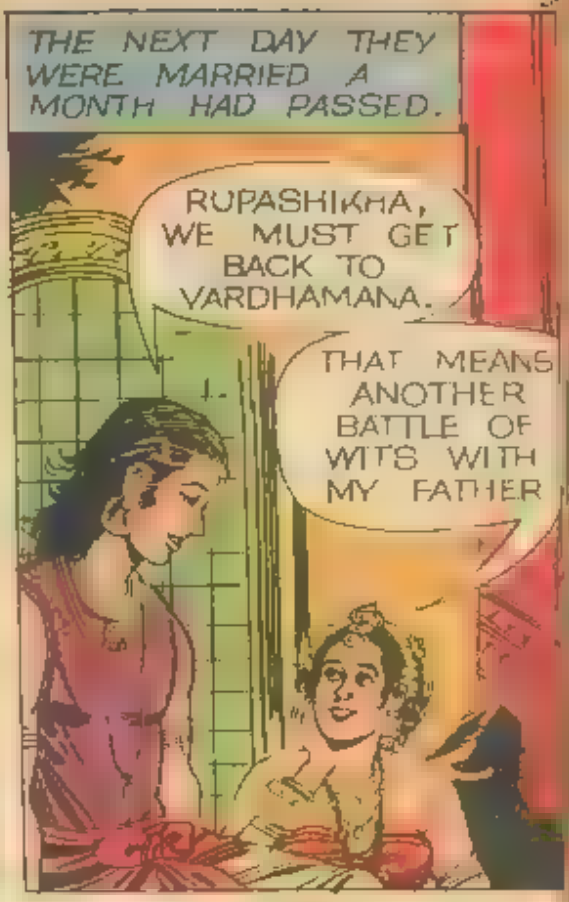

A LITTLE FARTHER ON
THERE'S LIFE IN THE OLD DEVIL YET
AND HE SPRINKLED THE WATER BEHIND HIM...

WHICH INSTANTLY BECAME A HUGE RIVER, EDDYING AND SWIRLING BEHIND HIM.
I'M NEARER HOME NOW, BUT STILL NOT OUT OF DANGER!

TWICE MORE HE CROSSED THE DEMON'S PATH— ONCE WITH THE TIGER
THIS THORN JUNGLE WILL TEAR HIM APART.


...AND FINALLY WITH THE FAGGOT WHICH SET THE SURROUNDING TREES AB. AZE.
I'M GOING BACK THIS HUMAN BEING IS TOO MUCH HARD WORK. I'LL JUST WAIT FOR ANOTHER ONE TO COME ALONG
AND HE WENT BACK, LEAVING SHRINGABH IA FREE TO RETURN, TRIUMPHANT.


AS SHRINGABHUJA GALLOPED HOME
THIS IMPOSSIBLE MAN! HOW DID HE ESCAPE MY BROTHER?
WELL DONE. NOW, YOU MAY MARRY MY DAUGHTER.


THE NEXT DAY THEY WERE MARRIED A MONTH HAD PASSED.
RUPASHIKHA, WE MUST GET BACK TO VARDHAMANA.
THAT MEANS ANOTHER BATTLE OF WITS WITH MY FATHER

HOW DO WE DO IT?
ST DON'T ANNOUNCE YOUR INTENTIONS WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A QUICK AND QUIET EXIT.

THE NEXT DAY
WE'RE GOING OUT FOR THE DAY INTO THE FOREST.
VERY WELL, PRINCESS.

HAVE YOU TAKEN THE GOLDEN ARROW?
YES — AND ALL MY JEWELS. AND WITH ME COMES THE RIGHT TO HALF THE KINGDOM.

THERE COMES MY FATHER ON HIS FLYING HORSE. I CAN FEEL THE AIR RUSTLE.
WHAT NOW?

SHE USED HER POWERS TO MAKE HIM AND THE HORSE INVISIBLE...

...DISGUISED HERSELF AS A WOODCUTTER...

...AND JOINED A WOODCUTTER WHO HAPPENED TO BE THERE. SOON—
DID YOU SEE A YOUNG COUPLE PASS THIS WAY?
WE SAW NO ONE. WE HAVE BEEN CUTTING WOOD ALL DAY— FOR KING AGNISHIKHA'S FUNERAL PYRE.

WHAT! ME, DEAD? I MUST RUSH HOME TO CHECK.
MY FOOLISH FATHER!

AND SHE JOINED SHRINGABHUJA—
SURELY, HE MUST REALIZE HE'S NOT DEAD.
RAKSHASAS ARE BIG AND FOOLISH.

AGNISHIKHA WAS SOON BACK. THIS TIME RUPASHIKHA WAS IN THE GUISE OF A MESSENGER.
DID YOU SEE A MAN AND A WOMAN GO BY?
NO, BUT THEN I AM SO FULL OF M OWN SORROW I DON'T SEE ANYTHING. I'M CARRYING A MESSAGE— KING AGNISHIKH IS ILL AND DYING.

I MUST HURRY BACK AND FIND OUT. AM I ILL? AM I DYING ?

THIS LAST ADVENTURE EXHAUSTED HIM.
LET THE PAIR GO. I'M TIRED. AND I THINK MY PEOPLE ARE LAUGHING AT ME. I WONDER WHAT IS SO FUNNY. THE FOOLS!

AT VARDHAMANA, SHRINGABHUJA HAD ARRIVED AND EVERYTHING WAS TOLD.
BANISH MY OTHER SONS!
FATHER, FORGIVE THEM.

I SUSPECT MY QUEEN'S IMPRISONMENT WAS ALSO A PLOT. I'LL SOON FIND OUT.
TELL AYASOLEKHA I'M SPENDING THE EVENING WITH HER.

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